

EDGAR AND EMMELINE.

F A I R Y T A L E.

Written by DR. HAWKESWORTH.

D R A M A T I S P E R S O N Æ.

EDGAR, Son to the Earl of Kent, disguised as a Woman, under the Name of Elfrida.

FLORIMOND, a Courtier.

EMMELINE, Daughter to Earl of Northum-

berland, disguised as a Man, under the Name of Gondibert.

ELFINA, a Fairy.

GROTILLA, a Fairy.

An Attendant Fairy.

Other Fairies, Servant, &c.

SCENE, WINDSOR-CASTLE, and the Parts adjacent.

A C T I.

SCENE I. A dark Part of Windsor Forest; the Castle in Prospect. One Side of the Horizon tinged with the Rays of the Setting-Sun; the Moon rising on the other. Light Musick. Several Fairies enter in grotesque Characters, moving to the Musick, and at Length forming a Ring and dancing.

Enter another Fairy.

RECITATIVE.

NOW no more in dells we sleep;
Here our revels now we keep;
By the moon, our silver sun—
See, our sports are now begun!

A I R.

Welcome, with thy lambent light,

Welcome, lovely queen of night!

To thy gentle reign belong,

Love, and mirth, and dance, and song.

War, and strife, and toil, and care,

Now their works of woe forbear;

Night shall now for day alone;

Give the night to joy alone!

[The Fairy mixes with those that dance.

Enter Elfrida, an old Fairy.

Elf. Hilt—break off!—My charge receive;

Then renew the sports ye leave.

[They leave off dancing; the music ceases; and Elfrida beckons first one, then another, speaking to them separately.

When the midnight hour is nigh,

Dutious to your tasks apply.

You, the miser's haunt be near,

Break his rest with causeless fear;

Creak his doors, his windows shake,

Till his iron heart shall quake.

You, as gouty humours flow,

Pinch the glutton by the toe.

You, with boding dreams molest

Proud ambition's anxious breast.

You, with fancied ghosts, affright

Atheists in their own despite:

Bold by day, the bluff ring spark,

Turns believer in the dark.

Hence, of vice to work the woe,

And the weal of virtue, go!

[The Fairies go out at one door; and as Elfrida

is going out at the other,

Enter Grotilla, another old Fairy.

Grot. Sister! sister!

Elf. Whence com'st thou?

Grot. I come far.

Elf. What to do? Tell me—

Grot. To confer with you.

Elf. Yonder—[Pointing to the castle].

Grot. What?

Elf. The castle there—

Grot. Well—

Elf. Contains my present care.

Grot. Briefly, then, thy care unfold.

Elf. Mark! it shall be briefly told.

Edgar, Emmeline, you knew—

Grot. Youthful both, and fair and true.

Elf. Thus their destiny was read,

While the sisters spun their thread;

A

"This youth a maid, this maid a youth must find;
 "The best, the fairest, both in form and mind:
 "Each, as a friend, must each esteem, admire;
 "Yet catch no spark of amorous desire!
 "Till this be done, no chance shall bliss bestow;
 "When this is done, no chance shall work them woe!

Grot. This was publish'd at their birth.

Elf. Right; and well 'tis known on earth.

Grot. Blest I wish them——

Elf. So do I.

Grot. Can you help them?——

Elf. Certainly.

Grot. Search the island round and round,
 None like either can be found.

Elf. Each by each must then be seen;
 But not lov'd——

Grot. Hard task, I ween!

Elf. Hard the task, I know it well.

Grot. How perform it?——

Elf. I can tell.

Here the king pursues the chase;

All his nobles croud the place:

Emm'line here a youth appears,

Gondibert the name she bears:

Edgar is a maid in dress,

Call'd Elfrida——

Grot. Now I guess.

Elf. To the youth, the virgin seems,
 Like himself, a youth; and deems,
 Like herself, the youth a maid;
 Neither thus to love-betray'd.

Grot. You contriv'd——

Elf. I did——

Grot. But——

Elf. Stay!

Mortal footsteps mark the way.

Vanish—quick! and leave me here:

If conjur'd, I must appear.

[*Exit Grotilla; Elfrida retires.*]

Enter Emmeline, disguised in a Man's Habit, as Gondibert.

Emm. What a situation am I in!—Is this figure really and truly Emmeline—the beloved and only daughter of great Northumberland? Every thing about me is so like a dream, that I am frighted to think I am awake.—O how weary I am of this dress! If I had known half that I should have suffered in it, all the fairies in the world should not have persuaded me to put it on.—If I resided here in this disguise the month of the king's hunting, I was to break the spell I was born under, and my life was to be happy—so the fairy told me!—Yet the time expires to-morrow, and nothing has happened to me but vexation and disappointment. I must once more see this powerful yet decrepit being, who, though invisible, is always within my call.—This ring, which she gave me, convenes her: if I take it off and touch it thrice, she appears—Once—twice—thrice!

[*Elfrida comes forward, and touches her.*]

Emm. O fairy! my situation is such as I can bear no longer.

Elf. Patience; for it ends to-morrow.

Emm. To-morrow!—to-morrow is a thousand years—When the horse has all he can bear, a feather will break his back.

Elf. What's the matter?

Emm. Matter! why, in the first place, I have lived almost a month in a court——

Elf. That your sorrow?

Emm. That my sorrow! yes—I that have always lived in my father's principality, fair Northumberland, where a noble simplicity of manners shewed

the heart to be open and undefining; have, by your persuasion and assistance, left it for a place where hypocrisy is avowed by the name of good breeding; where the most shameful licentiousness is justified as gallantry; dissimulation and perfidy, as address and good management; where self-interest is professed as the first principle of wisdom, and virtue and public spirit derided as extravagance and superstition.

Elf. But your dress was your defence.

Emm. O! it is my dress that exposes me to more than half that I suffer. When one of my own sex is in company, I am comparatively happy; but how unfit for a woman's ear is the conversation of men, when it is not restrained by knowing that a woman is present! I begin to fear that I should not have thought so well even of those men I have been used to converse with, if they had appeared to me as they appear to each other.—The friendship and confidence of these lords of the creation, have almost robbed me, a weak woman, of my allegiance. I am frighted at the thought of living among them.

Elf. Fear not vices you detest.

Emm. Fear not! but what must I hope? O Fairy! if I have implicitly followed your instructions, if I have hidden them in my breast from every friend, and even from good Northumberland, my father, let me no longer suffer the anguish of suspense.

Elf. Persevere; believe; confide.

Emm. But I have yet found no object worthy of my love.

Elf. You must find, and know it not.

Such the fates ordain'd thy lot!

Emm. I know the mystery of my fate—that the happiness of my life depends upon my seeing and making a friend of the most beautiful and accomplished of men, without one thought of love—Alas!—forgive my doubts, my fear—should you—

Elf. Hold! of foul mistrust beware—To-morrow

Emm. Well, then, till to-morrow——

Elf. Soft—unhallowed feet are nigh!—Florimond——

Emm. O! that wretch haunts me like my shadow. To rally me for what he calls my virtue seems to be his supreme delight; he is proud of his own insensibility to what gives me pain: the confusion he throws me into, he considers as a test of his own abilities and accomplishments; and as vanity is his predominant passion, he is so assiduous to secure the enjoyment of his superiority that I can scarce escape him one hour in a day.

Elf. He shall work thee woe and weal,
 As to-morrow shall reveal.

Emm. But how? where?—dear, dear Fairy!—

Elf. Ha, ha, ha! How and where must still perplex ye;

And, in kindness, I must vex ye—Ha, ha, ha!

Emm. Gone!—Mystery! perplexity, and distress! She sports, too, with my anxiety! I almost wish had not trusted her: but 'tis too late—Here comes Florimond, and my torment begins.

Enter Florimond, singing.

Flar. Ha! my little Gondibertus! have I found you?—What, all alone? [*Peeping about.*] Egad! was in hopes there had been a wench in the case and that I might have given thee joy of thy reformation.

Emm. Sir, I chose to be alone. Solitude sometimes not only useful, but pleasant.

Flor. Why, 'tis a fine moon-light evening, indeed—But what the devil—

Emm. I have sufficient subject for meditation, Sir; and I hoped that, as there is a ball at the castle to-night, you would have been better engaged than to watch my privacy.

Flor. What! better engag'd than to raise such a recruit for the *beau monde*, as thou art?—Come, come, thou shalt not thus steal away from good company to thyself.

Emm. Sir, upon my word, I'm fit company for none but myself at present.

Flor. Pshaw!—What, always muzzy, with a dismal countenance as long as a tailor's bill! Come, cheer up, boy, I've news for thee.

Emm. For me, Sir! [*Alarm'd*.]

Flor. Aye, to divert thee I mean; that's all.

Emm. What, is it any thing uncommon, then?

Flor. No, faith, not very uncommon neither; though, perhaps, thou may'st make a wonder of it.—'Tis only an heiress that's just run away with a young fellow.

Emm. That, indeed, is not so uncommon as might be wish'd. But who is she? is she of any fashion?

Flor. Yes, faith, she is of some fashion; Northumberland's fair daughter Emmeline, that's all—

Emm. Oh!—

Flor. What, thy virtue is shock'd at the licentiousness of the age! Ha, ha, ha!—Or art thou a lover of the fair Emmeline's? hey!

Emm. [*Aside*.] What shall I say? My confusion will certainly betray me—'Twas only a sudden pain shot cross my breast—But what particulars do you hear?

Flor. Why, it seems she got leave of her father to follow him hither; and it is just accidentally discovered, that she left his castle the next day, tho' she has not been here yet.

Emm. Well; but why do you therefore conclude that she's gone off with a man?

Flor. Why, only because the duke of Kent's son, Edgar, disappeared upon the same pretence, just at the same time; and both have been missing ever since.

Emm. And is this sufficient to authorize a positive assertion to the prejudice of a reputation, which hitherto not slander itself has presum'd to stain?

Flor. Ha, ha, ha! Not slander itself has presum'd to stain! Ha, ha, ha! [*Mimicking her*.]

Emm. [*Aside*.] O my heart! what new insult am I doom'd to suffer?—You'll excuse me, Sir, if upon this occasion, I take the liberty to tell you, that your mirth is rather ill-timed; and—

Flor. Sir—do you know this fair lady, that you are so much dispos'd to become her knight-errant?

Emm. [*Aside*.] I must be cautious, or my zeal may discover me. Sir, though I should not know her, it is my point of honour, never to suffer the reputation of the absent to be wantonly sported away upon mere circumstances and surmise.

Flor. Your point of honour!—why, to be sure, all this is very fine. But I'll tell you a secret, my dear—As unfasten'd as you may think the fair Emmeline's reputation, there is a certain humble servant of yours, that shall be nameless, who has some small reason to think, that a certain piece of brittle ware, which she had the keeping of, may be a little crack'd—or so.

Emm. [*Aside*.] A wretch! who never saw me but in this disguise—You are well acquainted with her, then?

Flor. Why—I am—

Emm. And, pray, what kind of woman is she?

Flor. Why, she's a pretty—upon my word, a very pretty wench.

Emm. But is she tall, or short, or brown, or fair?

Flor. You have never seen her, you say?

Emm. No more than I do this moment.

Flor. [*Aside*.] Then I may venture—Why, she is fair, tall, and slender; has a fine neck, a very fine neck! her limbs remarkably well turn'd; her leg and ankle the finest I ever saw—

Emm. [*Distress'd and confounded*.] Oh!

Flor. Aye—I thought I should set you a longing; but come, she's not to be had at present it seems; so no more of her.

Emm. I cannot so easily dismiss her as you may imagine; and yet, perhaps, you may mistake the reason.

Flor. Very likely, faith; but what is it?

Emm. Why I am astonish'd, that you make so light of what has happen'd to her; whether you consider it as the loss of a mistress, or whether as a misfortune to a woman you must be suppos'd to have lov'd, and to whom you must have had obligations of the strongest and most tender kind: one of these lights you must see it in.

Flor. Why, my dear, as to that, I am extremely easy about losing her; for between you and I—I could spare her. I must, indeed, confess, that I was very fond of her once; but, 'faith, the obligations were all on her side—It's among ourselves.

Emm. [*Aside*.] O, my heart! what a monstrous compound of vanity and lies is this!—How so, pray, Sir?

Flor. Why, I us'd to meet her in her father's park night after night, at the risk of my life; and, I gad, what with the danger, and what with the fatigue, I grew tir'd of her; and, to tell you the truth, provided her another lover, to make good my retreat. It's among ourselves.

Emm. Well said—and who was that, Sir?

Flor. The very same Edgar that she is now run away with. I thought it would be a pretty thing for him; for he is one of your fighting fellows, that is never so happy as when he's in danger—but I'm sorry he has been so indiscreet.

Emm. Pray, Sir—excuse me—I don't pretend to question the truth of what you say; but there are some difficulties in the story, that I should be glad to have clear'd up—If you was so much in the lady Emmeline's good graces, and had, as you say, no dislike to her person, how came you not to think of marrying her? Such an alliance, I presume, would not have dishonoured you.—I shall confound him now. [*Aside*.]

Flor. Marrying her! I gad, she knew a trick worth two o' that. I would have have married her; and I told her so. "My dear Florimond," says she—her arm was then lying negligently cross my shoulder, thus—and she look'd archly at me, thus—"My dear Florimond," says she, "why should you and I, that have now only the power of making each other happy, suffer a doating old priest to give us the power of making each other miserable? If you were to be my husband, you might cease to be my lover; and then," says she, with a most roguish leer, "perhaps I might be tempted to take another; you would tyrannize, I should rebel; you would enjoy nothing but the hope of breaking my heart, and I should enjoy nothing but the hope of breaking yours."

Emm. [*Aside*.] Still, still I draw upon myself more confusion.—But why, then, did she run away with Edgar? That must ruin her schemes, both of interest and pleasure.

Flor. Nay, how the devil can I tell that?

[Emmeline walks apart, confus'd and embarrass'd.]

Flor. What, in your reveries!—Thou art now musing on some wondrous love, like an ever faithful lover tell death—ha, ha, ha!—Come, come, phaw, don't be a fool; some kind wench now would cure you—I gad, what think you of Elfrida?—Come along, we'll call at her apartment: perhaps she's dressing, and we shall be admitted to her toilet. Upon my soul, a fine figure of a woman! a little masculine, that's all; but take my word for it, a delicious morsel for all that!—Hark ye—if you are not sheepish, she'll not be coy: it's among ourselves—I tell you, as a friend; 'faith I don't love to monopolize—I'll just tickle up her fancy a little, and leave you together. Come—

Emm. Pray, Sir—

Flor. I will, 'faith.

Emm. I must insist—

Flor. Nay, nay, come along, come along.

[Lays hold of her.]

Emm. Sir, I must absolutely be excus'd at present.

Flor. Why, what a plague is it, now, that thou hast taken into thy head?

Emm. Sir, I have an affair that at present requires me to be alone; which I cannot farther explain, than—

Flor. Say no more, say no more. [Aside.] I gad, I have guess'd it now—A challenge!—Why, there's light enough for two people to cut one another's throats by, to be sure—I'll away—Well, my dear, if I must leave you to the dew and the moonshine, I must; but d'ye hear—'faith I'll to Elfrida—will you follow me? If you don't stay too long, you'll find an *attendriment*, that you may be oblig'd to your humble servant for; that's all—it's among ourselves.—Adieu. [Exit.]

Emm. Why, fare thee well, thou—wretch, without a name—What will, what can become of me! What is it that prompts this fool, whom as I never knew, I never could provoke, to wrong me thus? Is it a sacrifice to his vanity? or is it mere wantonness and sport?—Pray heav'n this Fairy don't deceive me!—What shall I do?—I must see her, and take her counsel in this new distress.

[She takes off her ring, and touches it thrice; but the Fairy does not appear.]

Ha!—sure I dream!—Forlorn, deserted!—this perfidious goblin!—Again I touch it; once—and twice—and thrice—and yet she is not here!—O I could—But though I see her not, she may be near me, to hear and punish the complaints which her unkindness forces from me—To whom can I now ease my heart!—O! sacred friendship!—but here I have no friend. Elfrida—yes, she indeed, as if by some secret sympathy, claims my confidence; and my heart tells me, she deserves it—Yes, I will trust her with my secret: she will be a witness for me against this slander, and assist me with her advice. [Exit.]

[The scene changes to Edgar's apartment, and discovers him at a toilet, dressing in the character of Elfrida; a woman attending.]

Edgar. Here, give me the ribbons.—Get you gone—I'll call you, when I want you.

Woman. [Aside.] This lady has the strangest humours! [Exit.]

Edgar. Was ever man in such ridiculous distress! I'm sure, I ne'er knew any thing like it, since I was Edgar the son of Kent. Here have I had a young trotting girl fiddle-faddling about me these two hours to dress me, forsooth—with an officious handiwork so provoking, that no virtue under that

of a stock-fish could endure it patiently. Yet an old woman upon these occasions I cannot bear; and, in short, I can no longer bear a young one.—It is my fate, they say, to be miserable, if I don't get acquainted with the finest girl in England, without wishing for her; and I was told by a little goblin that started up before me, after it had led me, under the appearance of a Jack o' Lantern, into a wood, That if I could spend the king's hunting-month here in this disguise, all would be right; but how my being in petticoats should make me less likely to love a 'fine girl, I cannot conceive! A fine girl, indeed, may be less likely to love me; but as to myself, it is high time for me to get into breeches, that I may get out of temptation. Here they flock about me—one sits down just before me, and, without any ceremony, ties her garter—another gets me to adjust her tucker.—I'm the witness of so many pranks, and the confident of so many secrets! Then I have my hours of mortification too: I am tormented by a swarm of profligate fops, who try to debauch every woman they see, with as little concern as they take snuff: wretches, who are as destitute of love, as they are of virtue; and have as little enjoyment, as they have understanding! And here I'm obliged to mince, and pish, and fye—and affect to blush—Ideath, when I'm bursting with indignation, and long to knock 'em down—I'll bear it no longer.

Elfrida suddenly appears from under the toilet, and places herself before him.

Edgar. Ha! What, again?

Elf. Again.

Edgar. Art thou my good or evil genius? Tell me.

Elf. As you think me, you shall find me.

Edgar. I will think thee, then, my good genius, for I would fain find thee so.

Elf. You must trust me too, or else—

Edgar. Trust you!—Look at the figure I make here, and then judge if I have not trusted you.

Elf. But your virtue must be tried.

Edgar. Tried!—By what new torments would you try it? Have I not suffered the two worst things in nature, temptation and suspense? Have not I—

Elf. No—you have not persevered: all is lost, if you give out.

Edgar. Resolve my doubts, then; torment me no longer with suspense: let me be certain of the event, and I will be an anchorite, in spite of this habit and all its works, a month longer.

Elf. Well—Observe me, then, and learn.

Edgar. [Eagerly.] What shall I learn?

Elf. Patience, Edgar!—Fare thee well. Ha, ha!

[A machine rises under her, and carries her away.]

Edgar. Derided, and forsaken!—I doubt this is one of the wanton and mischievous elves, that tantalize poor mortals for their own diversion: however, as I have played in the farce so long, I'll not stop in the last scene.—

Enter Woman.

Woman. Ma'm, here's my Lord Trifle has sent his compliments to your la'ship, and begs to know, whether he shall have the honour of waiting upon your la'ship to the ball.

Edgar. [Recovering his female attitude and accent.] My compliments, am much oblig'd to his lordship, but am engag'd.

Woman. Yes, Ma'am.

Edgar. Hark'ye—

Woman. Ma'am.

Edgar. Has Gondibert call'd here this evening?

Woman. No, Ma'am.

Edgar. Nor sent?

Woman. No, Ma'am.

[Exit.]

Edgar. There's a man, now, who might atone for the vices of the whole sex! I am so anxious to recommend myself to him, even in this disguise; and feel such a reluctance to do any thing that may disgust him, even while he thinks me a woman; that when he is present, I labour to make my manner suit with my appearance, I know not how, by a kind of involuntary effort. How strange is the rapidity with which some minds unite!

Enter Woman.

Woman. Ma'am, there's Count Florimond.

Edgar. Did not I tell you—

Woman. Yes, Ma'am; and I told him—but he said he knew your la'ship was at home, and that he must see you.

Edgar. Must see me!

Woman. Yes, Ma'am; and though I told him your la'ship was a dressing, yet he would follow me—O Lord, he's the strangest man—He's here, an please your la'ship—

Enter Florimond.

Edgar. [Aside.] What a farce must I now act! Pray heav'n it has not a tragical catastrophe!

Flor. My dear goddess!

Edgar. Lord, how can you be so monstrous rude!—bursting into one's dressing-room—and putting one into such flurries—

[He fumbles at pinning on a breast-knot.]

Flor. That your heart beats in concert with mine—The dear toilet is not more the altar of beauty, than of love—Permit me the honour, Ma'am, of assisting to place that envied ornament on your bosom.

Edgar. Lord, Sir!—I beg—not for the world—you quite confound me—

Flor. [Pressing.] My life! My angel!—

[Catches him hastily round the waist, and endeavours to kiss him; upon which Edgar gives him a smart blow on the ear.]

Edgar. Nay, then there is no expedient—

Flor. [Retreating backward.] Ma'am!—

[Edgar stamps, and Florimond starts and retreats farther back; at the same time]

Emmeline, as Gondibert, appears at the door.

Flor. I protest, Ma'am—[Frighted.]

Edgar. [Sternly.] And I protest, Sir—

Flor. Ma'am, I beg—

Edgar. And I beg, Sir—

Flor. [Turning and seeing Gondibert.] O—Ma'am your most humble servant.

[Going]

Emm. [Aside to Flor.] Sir—I am under very great obligations to you—but I would not have you tickle up her fancy any more, upon my account.

Flor. Deuce take you!—I wish you had been as near her as I was.

[Is going, but again stops and adjusts his wig, by a pocket mirror.]

Edgar. [To Emmeline, recovering himself, and adjusting his dress.] Lord, Sir—I'm in such a flurry—I, I, I, I'm very sorry I should have been provok'd to any thing so unbecoming the delicacy of my sex.

Flor. Upon my soul, so am I too—Sir, your humble servant.

[Exit.]

Emm. You have no reason to apologize for your indignation, Madam; though your blow was something spirited, I must confess.

Edgar. I'm in such confusion, Sir—and he has made me such a figure!—to treat me with indecent familiarities!

Emm. Dear Madam, compose yourself, and think no more of him. He has not been much better

company to me, than he has to you, I'll assure you.

Edgar. Lord, Sir, you surprise me!—Pray, what impertinence has he been guilty of to you?

Emm. He has been filling my ears with scandal, Madam; a subject which seems to be equally suitable both to his abilities and disposition! He has been telling me, that Edgar—

Edgar. Who, Sir? [Hastily.]

Emm. Edgar, Madam, the son of the earl of Kent—

Edgar. What of him, Sir?—what scandal has he spread of Edgar?

Emm. [Aside.] Ha! so interested!—She loves him, sure.

Edgar. Let me conjure you, Sir, if this wretch has said any thing to dishonour Edgar, you would tell it to me.

Emm. [Aside.] It must be so—Your very earnestness forbids me, Madam.

Edgar. I know I'm mov'd, and you must think it strange.

Emm. [Surpris'd at the masculine tone and manner into which his earnestness involuntarily betrays him.] Strange, indeed!

Edgar. Perhaps, 'tis stranger still than you can think.

Emm. Your manner, Madam—

Edgar. No matter—Forms and modes become trivials too small for notice, when they stand in competition with a friend's good name.

Emm. [Aside.] Her love is to distraction—She frights me, and is not to be trusted—

Edgar. Let me conjure you—tell me—

Emm. I cannot tell you, Madam.

Edgar. Cannot!

Emm. I ought not—Trust me, there are reasons—Let it suffice, that in the story I have heard, a lady's honour is as much concerned as Edgar's; that the slander cannot interest you, more than me; that I will do my utmost to make it's falshood so notorious, that it cannot be believ'd; and I entreat that, as you tender your peace, you would as yet enquire no farther—I know myself not proof against your importunity; and therefore you will excuse me, if, having no other way, I save myself by flight. [Exit.]

[Edgar runs out after her, but returns.]

Edgar. Curse on this cumbersome habit! I cannot overtake him. Was ever any thing so vexatious! I have been defam'd by some scandalous falshood, and I must do my honour justice—I can, at a small expence of dissimulation, get that wretch, Florimond, to repeat to me all that he has told to Gondibert: I will do it—and I will as yet lie in ambush under this disguise, to make sure of my blow. [Exit.]

Emmeline, as Gondibert, re-enters.

Emm. She's gone!—What can I, or what ought I to do? If I had told her the story, I must have discovered myself to convince her it could not be true: but who knows what a jealous woman might have thought upon finding the very person, who is said to have gone off with her lover, in so strange a disguise!—Yet she will certainly contrive to hear it from Florimond; and then, good heaven! what will she suffer, if I do not convince her that it is false!—I must, I will trust her—I have no other chance to save her, but by making a discovery, which, if I had really gone off with Edgar, it is certain I should not have made, especially to her. But I must not intrude upon her now: I will plant myself where I may intercept her before she can see Florimond, and trust to generous friendship for the event. [Exit.]

SCENE I. *The Terrace, at Windsor Castle.**Enter Florimond, with a Letter.*

Flor. AYE—he was obliged to be angry, be-
cause that fool Gondibert appear'd just
in the critical minute at the door—pox take him!
—I might have known it was not natural, by her
overdoing it—it was, indeed, overdone with a
vengeance! But now she's in the pannicks, left I
should resent it. Now she has something to say—
and—if I am disengag'd—she will be glad to meet
me upon the terrace. If I should humble her now,
and not meet her—but that would be cruel. I will,
however, take some state upon me—I will look
a little formal; it may save me some trouble in my
future advances—Here she comes.

*Enter Edgar, still disguis'd as Elfrida.**[Florimond receives him with an air of negli-
gent haughtiness, and makes a formal bow.]***Edgar.** Sir, I hope you will not take any advan-
tage of my weakness—**Flor.** *[Turning from her.]* Weakness! pox on
you—Your weakness don't lie in your arm, I'm
sure o'that.**Edgar.** *[Following.]* Or suppose, Sir, that what-
ever reason I may have for desiring this meeting—
What ails the wretch gives himself! *[Aside.]*—
I say, Sir, that you would not suppose—I cannot
contain myself!—**Flor.** Poor soul! what confusion! I will relax a
little of my severity. *[Aside.]* Madam, I will sup-
pose nothing, but that you have given me another
opportunity of hearing your commands.**Edgar.** I think, Sir, you was telling Gondibert
a certain affair between you, and Edgar, and a lad-
dy; and something that, by his manner of telling
it, I could not very well understand.**Flor.** *[Aside.]* Aye—a very good introduction
—a love-story is a most excellent prelude to a love
scene—I perceive we are to adjourn—Why,
Madam, a certain fair lady, call'd Emmeline, has
thought fit to make Edgar as happy, as any man
can be made, except him, Madam, whom you
shall please to honour with the same favour—
Upon my soul, she's a fine creature!**Edgar.** Sir, your compliments really put me so
out of countenance—that I shall blush to death—**Flor.** Your blushes are so becoming, Madam,
that—**Edgar.** Give me leave, Sir, to entreat, that you
would at present spare my confusion, and tell me
all the particulars of that affair which have come to
your knowledge.**Flor.** Aye—she wants a luscious description,
now. *[Aside.]* Why, Madam, I presume that Ed-
gar, being fir'd with the charms of Emmeline, first
gas'd languishingly upon her; caught her eyes the
first time they were casually turn'd upon him; when,
in a soft confusion, she hastily turn'd her look
downward, and blush'd; he took her hand, first
pressing it gently in his own, then raising it to his
lips; then, Madam, I presume he might proceed
to—**Edgar.** Sir!—I shall certainly be out of pa-
tience, and knock him down. *[Aside.]*—Sir, if
you have any desire to oblige me—or have any
expectations, Sir, of favours—Not, Sir, that I—**Flor.** My dear angel, keep me no longer in sus-
pense; let me know your commands, that I may
fulfil the condition of—**Edgar.** *[Drawing back.]* Hold, Sir—You must
then, without farther delay or interruption, give

me a direct answer to a few short questions.

Flor. Why, Madam, it shall then be in your
own way.**Edgar.** First then, Sir, are you acquainted with
Edgar, the young heir of Kent?**Flor.** Why, Madam, to proceed implicitly as you
direct, I believe there are few persons who know
more of that gentleman, than your humble servant.**Edgar.** *[Aside.]* Matchless impudence!—And
pray, Sir, what kind of a youth is he?**Flor.** *[Aside.]* I see by her curiosity she don't know
him—Why, Madam, the youth is a, a, a, ra-
ther soft—a green youth, Madam, as we say—**Edgar.** Sir, these are terms that I do not per-
fectly comprehend: and, therefore, I beg you would
be more explicit.**Flor.** Why then, explicitly, Madam, he is, upon
my soul, a shallow fellow—a very shallow fel-
low, faith—It's among ourselves,**Edgar.** He is.**Flor.** He is indeed, Madam—The poor devil
has some aukward good nature, and I have a kind-
ness for him; but, between you and I, he'll never
be so much a man of honour as I could wish him—**Edgar.** *[Forgetting his feminine character, and
running up to him.]* How, villain!**Flor.** *[Frighted and drawing back.]* Ma'am!—**Edgar.** *[Aside.]* What have I done! *[He draws
himself again into form.]* To think of villainy in
people that, by their rank, are set up as examples to
others, quite transports me out of myself—Heigh
ho!—It has quite overcome me.*[Attempts to be faint, and takes out a smelling-bottle.]***Flor.** *[Aside.]* What a terrible virago it is!—
May I presume, Madam, to lend you my hand.*[Approaching cautiously.]***Edgar.** It is over, Sir—I'm so subject to
furies—and my poor nerves are so shattered—
I'm extremely oblig'd to you for this character of
Edgar—To have been guilty of any thing base!**Flor.** Very base, I assure you, Madam.**Edgar.** Sir—*[Assuming a fierce masculine air,
but instantly correcting himself.]***Flor.** Ma'am—*[Starting back.]* Fore Gad, she's
mad!—and upon my soul in my opinion damna-
bly mischievous. *[Aside.]***Edgar.** Give me leave, Sir—as well as I am
able—to ask you what in particular has—but
I see company coming—If we walk this way,
we shall avoid them.**Flor.** *[Aside.]* Avoid them!—Heaven forbid!
—Perhaps, Madam, another time—**Edgar.** Sir, I shall die, if my curiosity is not
gratified.**Flor.** Madam—at present I am—**Edgar.** Sir, I beg—for my reputation, that
we may not be surpris'd together, while I am in
this disorder.**Flor.** By no means, Madam—let us part this
moment—If you'll go off one way, I'll go the
other.**Edgar.** O not for the world!—To be seen to
part hastily, upon being observed together, would
be the subject of eternal scandal.—Let me beg the
favour of your arm—*[Lays hold of his arm.]***Flor.** *[Crying out.]* Lord Gad, Madam!—**Edgar.** Sir?**Flor.** You'll pinch it through—**Edgar.** Lord, Sir, 'tis my fright—One natu-
rally clasps any thing hard in a fright.**Flor.** Madam, you do me honour—*[Edgar holds his arm; he keeps as far off as he
can, and fixes his eyes upon him as they go out.]*

EDGAR AND EMMELINE.

7

By the heavens! she has the gripe of a bum-bailiff. [*Aside.*]

[*Exit.*]

SCENE, the dark Grove.

Enter Elfrida.

Elf. Sister! sister! [*Grotilla suddenly appears.*]

Grot. ——— Here am I.

Elf. Now the fated hour is nigh,
Keep the lovers in your eye.
Each to each shall soon be known;
Each for each was born alone.

Grot. Florimond, the caitiff vile——

Elf. They shall prosper by his guile:
(Evil we for good permit)
This their friendship's knot shall knit.
But the fated hour is nigh——
Come, ye elves, whose minds perceive,
By secret impulse, what I will;
Come, your sports this moment leave,
And what I ordain fulfil.

[*Many Fairies suddenly appear.*]

Now the fated hour is nigh,
To rites that charm from ill apply.
Form the circle on the dew,

[*They form a ring.*]

Round, and round, the track renew——

[*They dance.*]

Mark it thrice, and thrice again——
Join with me the magic strain.

S O N G.

I.

By the bat's nocturnal flight
O'er the sleeping plants and flow'rs;
By the moon's inconstant light,
Potent spell of midnight hours——

II.

By the ring of various dyes,
Circling oft the silver ball;
By the gential mists that rise,
By the virgin dews that fall——

III.

By the meteor's gleamy spark,
Wand'ring o'er the reedy lake;
Stars that shoot asbward the dark,
Lights from polar skies that break——

IV.

By night, and all things that to night pertain——
Ye rival powers, from adverse arts abstain!
Intrude not now my purpose to contest;
But let the pair that I would bless, be bless.

Elf. Cease, the fated hour is nigh!——
Cease, and to the castle fly!
Careful watch the great event,
Finish'd ere the day be spent.

[*Fairies and the Scene disappear together.*]

Enter Emmeline, still disguised as Gondibert.

Emm. She's gone out, and I have unfortunately missed her——She is certainly got to Florimond! Ha! yonder they are——Yes, it is certainly so——What violent emotion!——Now they move hastily forward——Now she stops short——her gestures are scarce feminine——Now she recovers herself——Florimond, too, seems to be frighted out of his gallantry, and extremely willing to put an end to the conversation——'Tis over! he leaves her, and she comes this way——Yes, I will open my whole heart to her; not for my sake now, but her own. Whatever are the first sallies of her surprize and passion, she must at length feel and return my friendship——Here she comes: I must not accost her too abruptly. [*Retires to a little distance.*]

Enter Edgar, still as Elfrida. Seeing Emmeline, he stops short.

Edgar. Ha! Gondibert——I know the generous

reason, now, of his reserve. In this disguise, what could my interest in Edgar appear to him, but love!—and if it had been so, how must I have been hurt by what he had to tell me!—But he is not less interested in the lady—so he said——Sure then he is to Emmeline, what he thought Edgar was to me!—Let me, then, repay his generous kindness; let me discover, not only what, but who I am, to convince him that the tale is false, which, if true, must destroy his peace. [*Going up to Emmeline.*—You need not shun me, Sir; I have now nothing to ask, that you would wish to conceal: I have only to request, that you would forgive me for having violated your injunction, not to satisfy the curiosity you had raised. I am apprized of your kind, your generous motive; and it has inspired my breast with all that it is possible I should feel for you, a grateful and ardent friendship.

Emm. Your love, Madam, I make no doubt, is fixed on a much nobler and more deserving object. Edgar, I presume——

Edgar. My connection with Edgar, Sir, is indeed, in some sense, the reason why your merit cannot make an impression, which I am not ashamed to say it might otherwise have done: and yet, Sir, let me confess that I am not affected by the story of his disappearing with Emmeline, as you might reasonably imagine, because I know for certain that it cannot be true.

Emm. [*Hastily.*] Ha! that it cannot be true——

Edgar. I now owe your friendship a discovery, if indeed it is a discovery, which I was prompted by mere regard to myself to have made before: I think there is a connection between you and Emmeline, that——

Emm. There is, indeed, a connection, Madam——a secret, which you convince me it is now in vain to affect to hide——

Edgar. Let me, then, claim it——But let me first, as a pledge of that friendship which I hope shall end but with our lives, give, for your secret, mine——

Emm. Do, then, nor keep me longer in suspense; for still, the more we talk, the more I am perplexed. [*Aside.*] What can her secret be!

Edgar. Why, then, in the first place, Sir—I am—a man——

Emm. [*Aside, with great emotion, which she labours to conceal.*] A man!——Good Heav'n! what will become of me!

Edgar. And now, let me at once embrace you as a friend: punctilios and forms no longer part us——

[*As Edgar advances eagerly to Emmeline, she hides her face, and appears in great confusion.*]

Edgar. [*Hastily.*] What ails my friend?

Emm. O! you have ruined all my pleasing project——prevented——but no matter——

Edgar. This is amazing! For heaven's sake, what d'ye mean?—You was not, sure, enamoured of my person——

Emm. O! no——You still mistake——

Edgar. Then tell me my mistake; for we may now converse on even terms: our hearts may now be opened to each other, without the forms and the reserve prescribed in friendships with the sester sex.

Emm. O! still you wander, wide and wider still——I cannot speak——

Edgar. You must——There is a secret, which, but now, your heart was ready to reveal——

Emm. And then I thought it known——but now——

Edgar. Now my warm heart has claimed you for my friend——

Emm. And now to tell it is impossible—I cannot

tell it—and if I could, you would not find the friendship that you hope—

[*Edgar looks earnestly at her, wond'ring and embarrass'd.*]

[*Aside.*] I sicken at his sight—Oh my heart!

Edgar. I'm all perplexity and wonder!—Your colour comes and goes, like a sick girl's—[*She becomes more confused, as he marks her confusion.*]—You tremble!—Heavens! he faints!—[*He catches her in his arms, and discovers her breast.*] By all my wonder and my joy, a woman!—How lovely her confusion!—O let my bosom warm thee back to life! Look up, and trust the honour of my love: You shall not whisper what you would conceal; nor will I seem to know it. [*She recovers.*]

Emm. O! let me hide me from myself—my sex thus known—in this disguise! Where shall my conscious blushes find a veil!—Who are you? Tell me, that I may hide you from your sight for ever.

Edgar. O! no—On that condition, let me ne'er be known.

Emm. Yet tell me—trust me—

Edgar. Trust thee! Yes, with my life I'd trust thee. Thy friend!—O! know me by a softer name—is Kent's young heir; that Edgar you have heard so falsely and so wantonly traduc'd.

Emm. Still wonders croud on wonders!

Edgar. I dream myself, or this is all enchantment.

Emm. So might you think; indeed, if more you knew me.

Edgar. Let me, then, know thee more, whom now I know as the most fair and gentle of thy sex; whom yet I saw and lov'd without desire—my pledge of happiness!—May I be thine!—But yet I rave—thy fate was not like Edgar's—

Emm. Spare me—thy words have pow'r, which yet thou know'st not.

Edgar. O! take me from the rack! My thoughts grow wild!—There is, indeed, a maid, whose fate I've heard was such as mine—that Emmeline—O! heav'n, that Emmeline, in whom I thought thy interest, love!—O! yes, it must, it shall—thou, thou art she!

Emm. Leave me, or I shall die with my confusion—

Edgar. Let me support thee, hide thee in my breast, where thou shalt breathe thy answer in a sigh—Art thou not Emmeline, my fated love?

Emm. If Emmeline be thy fated love—I am—

Edgar. Still let me clasp thee close, and closer still; calm all the tumults of thy feeling mind, and soothe thee into confidence by love.

Emm. No, let me now retire; for, in this dress, I cannot bear to see myself, or you.

Edgar. Yet stay—forgive the violence I do you. My fame and yours are wantonly traduc'd; 'tis fit that we do justice to them both, and punish the traducer.

Emm. He is not worth resentment.

Edgar. He is for others sakes, though not his own—I have a thought, would Emmeline but join—

Emm. Tell me, then, quickly.

Edgar. Send him a challenge in behalf of Emmeline, as Gondibert; and meet him, not as Gondibert, but Emmeline: I will take care to be present, not as Elfrida, but Edgar: He will then be self-convicted as a liar, by knowing neither of the persons he has defam'd; and we may farther punish him as we please.

Emm. Well, I will try at this; but now dismiss me. [*She breaks from his band, and runs off.*]

Edgar. Farewel, my love!—How has the hand of heav'n vouchsafed to guide me through all the mazes of my fate to bliss! Even my revenge, my justice rather, upon that wretch, whose very folly is invenom'd, shall be compleat—But a mind so base can never be brave—Suppose he should not come—He's here.

Enter Florimond. Seeing Edgar, he stops short.

Flor. God take me—this damn'd madwoman is certainly fated to be my death.

[*Edgar advances towards him; he draws back, and looks frigid.*]

Edgar. Sir, I am so shock'd when I reflect upon the indecorous that my passions have made me guilty of to you, and my poor spirits are so flurried, that I really am not able to make my apology.

Flor. Ma'am, I am extremely sorry—and, Ma'am—I must absolutely fly from your ladyship's apology— [*Going.*]

Edgar. Sir, I must beg the favour of your ear for a few minutes—I hope, Sir, you will pardon my confusion—I have something to say to you, Sir, that—Let me beg, Sir, that you would come a little nearer—

Flor. [*Aside.*] Pox on her—she wants to fasten her damn'd claws upon me again—[*To her.*] Your commands, Madam, always do me honour—And upon my soul, always leave me black and blue. [*Aside.*]

Edgar. I have just heard, Sir; something that has flustered me to such a degree—

Flor. [*Aside.*] Aye—another fright! she'll certainly lay hold of me—[*Retiring.*] Ma'am—a, a, a, I hope there's no danger threatens your ladyship—

Edgar. Not directly me, Sir; nor indeed much danger to you: but I was willing you should be prepared—

Flor. Danger—prepared—for Heav'n's sake, Madam, what d'ye mean?

Edgar. Why Gondibert, Sir—you'll excuse my freedom—Lard, that I should be so indiscreet—I'm sensible, that the interest I take in the affair, may be liable to constructions of such a nature—that—

Flor. Lord, Ma'am, if there is any villainous design against me, I beseech you to let me know it—[*Looking about.*] Perhaps we had better change our ground; some villain may be taking aim at me as I stand.

Edgar. You need not be under such apprehensions, Sir; it is a matter of no consequence—It is only, that Gondibert is to send you a challenge, for the liberty you have taken with lady Emmeline; that's all—

Flor. Oh, if it's only an intention of Gondibert to cut my throat, to be sure that's a matter of no consequence—A bloody-minded ruffian! [*Aside.*]

Edgar. Why, Sir, to my certain knowledge, Gondibert knows no more of a sword, than a girl of eighteen; and has not a grain more courage.

Flor. [*Taking courage.*] Why, as to that, Madam—

Edgar. As to that, Sir, I am confident it would make no difference to you; but as I know he won't fight, and only presumes upon an insolent opinion, that Count Florimond's courage is as questionable as his own—

Flor. [*Blustering.*] How, Madam!

Edgar. Lard, Sir, if you are so violent, I shall certainly fall into my tremors—I shall certainly want the support of your arm.

Flor. [*Aside.*] Mercy upon me! and I shall want but very little killing afterwards, if you do.

Edgar. I say, Sir, I think he should be properly expos'd; and I hope you'll act accordingly.

Flor. Madam—excuse me—a coward is my aver-

Son; and you may depend upon his being chastised with most exemplary severity—but I should be sorry to mistake his character. [*Aside.*]—You know he won't fight?—

Edgar. [*A little basily.*] Sir, if you suspect my veracity—

Flor. O! Lord, Madam—no, not in the least.

Edgar. You'll excuse me, Sir: I am really ashamed of the liberty I have taken—Sir, your humble servant. [*Exit.*]

Flor. Madam, your most obedient—Thank heav'n, she's gone—It was a lucid interval; but it would not have been of much longer continuance. I'm oblig'd to her though, for her information—indeed am I—Egad, I'll make a figure in this business—But, if the challenge is coming, I must be at home to receive it. [*Exit.*]

SCENE E, the dark Grove.

Enter several Fairies.

1st Fairy. Come away, come away!

We have jubilee to-day.

2d Fairy. Wherefore, wherefore?

3d Fairy. Tell me.

4th Fairy. Tell me.

1st Fairy. Ere the ev'ning sheds the dew,

You shall know, and you, and you.

2d Fairy. What is finish'd?

3d Fairy. What is plann'd?

1st Fairy. Peace—the sisters are at hand.

Enter Elfina and Grotilla, with many Fairies in grotesque Characters.

Elf. Now we triumph!—now 'tis past!

Spells are broken, joy shall last!

Let the voice of music rise;

Music, grateful to the skies.

AIR, with Chorus.

We triumph, we triumph, with victory blest;
And beauty and truth are of pleasure possess'd.

Let mortals be told, and rejoice in the sound,

"No lovers henceforward by fate shall be bound?"

There's now no conditions of pleasure but two,

Which they all may fulfil—to be tender and true.

Da Capo.

Elf. Now let ev'ry elf and fay

Dance the laughing hours away:

Let your nimble feet rebound,

Lightly from the daisied ground;

Trip it round, and round, and round.

[*A dance.*]

Elf. [*Stopping suddenly.*] Hift—a mortal foot is
None must here remain but I. [*nigh—*]

[*Exit all but Elfina, who retires to the Back of the Stage.*]

Enter Florimond.

Flor. This is the place, and this is the time—
but I see no signs of my little Gondibertus—Ha!
here comes a *bona roba*, whom I have not the honour to know—Egad this affair will turn out with an eclat—very much to my honour—I'll make the most of it: I'll let her into my business here, without seeming to see her.

[*Emmeline enters in her own habit, and observes him; he affects not to see her; but walks basily to and again, often looking on his watch, affecting great impatience, and speaking as to himself.*]

A poitroon! not to meet me upon his own challenge—I'll make him know what it is to insult a man of honour—If the wretch had met with me, I would have given him his life; but now to spare him—a scandal to mankind! Ha! [*Affects to be surpris'd at seeing Emmeline.*] Death, interrupted and discovered!—[*Half aside.*] Madam—I protest

—I am confounded—I am afraid that my natural impetuosity has a, a, a—

Emm. Sir, I am very sorry that I should have intruded upon your privacy; but, perhaps, I have prevented something that would have had worse consequences.

Flor. Madam, I am not at liberty—

Emm. By the few words, Sir, which just now involuntarily escaped you, I know that you are waiting here upon an affair of honour—but I intreat—

Flor. Madam, it is impossible—nothing but his life can atone for the insult.

Emm. You will excuse a woman, tho' a stranger, Sir, upon such an occasion: may I intreat to know, Sir, who has had the misfortune to incur the resentment of a gentleman, who seems so little to deserve ill treatment, and so able to punish it?

Flor. Madam, you do me honour—She is making advances already. [*Aside.*]—Why, Madam, as the treatment I have received makes it an act of justice to tell, what I should otherwise rather die than discover, I will comply with your request—Hem! A little, dirty dependant upon the court, here, Madam, one Gondibert, thought fit to send me a challenge, upon account of something I happened to say concerning a lady, in whose good graces I happen'd to be, and whom a foolish young fellow that I was a friend to has thought fit to run away with; and, Madam, though I have so far treated him like a gentleman, as to accept his challenge, he has not come to the place appointed, and it is now half an hour past the time.

Emm. [*Looking out.*] Methinks I see somebody at a distance, coming this way; perhaps that may be the gentleman—

Flor. [*Starting, and looking out as afraid.*] Ah! egad that's certainly he—[*Aside.*] Now, if he should not be a coward at last—Madam, a, a, a, for God's sake retire—for—a, a, a.

Emm. Sir, I believe it will not be necessary; for I'm pretty sure now, that the gentleman is a friend of mine—

Flor. A friend of yours, Madam! pray, who is he?

Emm. A gentleman, Sir, who, I am sure, will be extremely glad to be better known to you.

Enter Edgar, in his proper Dress.

Emm. [*Aside.*] Yes, 'tis he, 'tis Edgar! With what elegance and dignity he looks the man!

Edgar. [*Aside.*] How soft, how lovely in her female dress!

Emm. [*To Florimond.*] Sir, as we are now no longer alone, I may confess, that I am not altogether a stranger to your person or your merit. [*To Edgar.*] Sir, this is Florimond, a gentleman to whom both you and I have some obligations, which I believe he is not at present aware of.

Flor. Upon my word, Madam, you absolutely confound me—this excessive honour—is it possible that I should have been so happy, as to confer obligations—Pray, Madam, may I crave the honour of your name?

Edgar. Do you not at all recollect that lady, Sir?

Flor. Upon my soul, Sir, I cannot say that I do.

Edgar. Who, now, do you think it can possibly be, of all that your polite generosity has oblig'd?

Flor. Let me perish, Sir, if I can tell.

Edgar. Why, Sir, that lady is one Emmeline; with whom, as she tells me, you was formerly most intimately acquainted; and whom you lately conversed with, Sir, in disguise, by the name of Gondibert: it's among ourselves—What, quite confounded, Sir!

Flor. [*Recovering himself.*] Ha! ha! ha! come

founded! Ha! ha! ha! No, no, Sir: you have had your jest, and I have had mine. I knew well enough who I was talking to, when I play'd upon the little Gondibertus—Ah! I thought I should make you smart for your frolic—I told Elfrida my whole scheme—

Edgar. You told Elfrida your whole scheme—

Emm. But pray, Sir, as you did not know my person in my own dress, how came you to know me in disguise?

Flor. Why, Madam, to confess the truth, I was let into the secret by a friend. [*Afide.*] Egad, this goes swimmingly—

Edgar. Well, Sir; but pray, give me leave to bring you acquainted with a person, who, I'm sure, you are at present totally a stranger to—Pray, who do you think I am?

Flor. [*Afide.*] Heaven knows! but wish I was fairly out of your clutches—Upon my soul, Sir, I have not the honour to know you, any otherwise than as a gentleman, whom I should be extremely proud to consider as my friend.

Edgar. Why, Sir, I have the honour to be one Edgar; a very shallow fellow, Sir, that you had some kindness for, because he was awkwardly good-natured: I have also had the honour to receive several of your civilities, under the name of Elfrida—It's among ourselves.

Flor. Sir, your most humble servant—I have at this time some urgent business—

Edgar. So have I, Sir; and therefore you must not leave me yet—You may remember, Sir, that you told me your whole scheme to punish Emmeline for her frolic, and to mortify her with stories of herself by way of joke.

Flor. Sir, I beseech you—

Edgar. Sir, I am extremely sorry for the occasion; but as this lady has not got her fighting cloaths on, you must excuse me if I take her challenge upon myself; and so Sir—[*Draws.*] It's among ourselves.

Emm. What has my thoughtless indiscretion done!

Flor. Ah, dear, Sir, now you are too serious—

Emm. This must not be—For heav'n's sake, Edgar, hear me!

Edgar. Fear not, my love—Sir, whatever you may think, this is but sport to what is to follow—and so, Sir, without more words—

Flor. O Lord, Sir!—I beseech you, Madam—

Emm. For my sake, Edgar—

Edgar. Trust me—Draw, Sir, or—

Flor. Sir, I don't desire to do you any harm; I don't, upon my soul, Sir.

Edgar. Scoundrel, coward, draw!

Emm. Consider, Edgar—

Flor. Ay, do, dear Sir, consider—

Edgar. Consider what?

Flor. That I am but a poor, miserable, lying coxcomb, Sir—Indeed, Sir, I am—

Emm. It is better to dismiss him, Edgar, as beneath your resentment.

Flor. So it is, indeed, Sir—a great deal better.

Emm. He is worthy only of contempt.

Flor. It is very true indeed, Sir.

Edgar. Art thou not a wretch, without the least principle of truth or honour?

Flor. Yes, Sir.

Edgar. Art thou not infamous, as a slanderer and a coward?

Flor. Yes, Sir.

Edgar. Have not thy very follies the malignity of

vices; and is it not a disgrace to nature, to consider thee as a man?

Flor. Any thing, dear Sir, if you will but spare my life—If you chuse any other satisfaction, Sir; if you would be content to kick me into some dark corner, and leave me, I should think myself under infinite obligations to you.

Edgar. Hence then—and be thyself thy punishment! [*Florimond runs off.*]

As Florimond runs off, Elfrida comes forward.

Ha!—Fear not, my Emmeline! It is a friendly pow'r, familiar to my sight.

Emm. What! is she known to you?—My friend! my guide!

Edgar. And mine!—[*Both run and kneel to her.*]

Elf. Rise both, both blest!

Emm. Forgive my diffidence—When my heart accused you, I was overwhelmed with distress!—Your promise to come at my call, was not fulfill'd.

Elf. I came not, that I might send you hither: [*Pointing to Edgar.*] Your friendship was the parent of your love.

Edgar. I too have need of your forgiveness! pardon my distrust.

Elf. Say no more—your fathers now

Ought to hear your mutual vow;

Both the royal presence grace,

Heroes both of British race!

Go, your duties there present;

I will answer for th' event.

Long may virtue guard your breast!

Joy shall then be long your guest.

[*The Fairy disappears.*]

Edgar. She's gone! the kind propitious spirit, that has led us, hoodwink'd, to the happiness, which, seeing, we had mis'd!

Emm. Let us then haste to follow her last advice; for I can trust her now.

A Fairy behind the Scenes.

Edgar, Edgar, Edgar!

Emm. Hark! What voice?

Edgar. Perhaps some other kind and invisible being—There's music too—[*An Overture to a Song.*]

Emm. It comes, another tiny spirit—It cannot mean us ill—It beckons you—

RECITATIVE.

Fairy. Hear me, Edgar; hear, and trust!

Still be kind, and still be just:

Truth and fondness that endure,

Love from jealousy secure.

A I R.

Take and keep the fated fair,

Born to give supreme delight;

Make her ever all thy care,

And secure thy envied right.

Clasp her to thy beating breast,

Round her lock thy faithful arms;

These will guard her virtue best,

These will best secure her charms.

[*The Fairy disappears.*]

Edgar. They need not such a guard, but yet shall have it.

Come then, my fair, whom fate my love ordains,

By whom kind Heav'n o'erpays my tears and pains!

Chos'n as thou art for graces of the mind,

Ere gold could influence, or desire could blind;

Whose charms, unfought, unknown, are friend-

ship's dow'r;

Whose love on reason founds its lasting pow'r.

O! might each pair thus work what fate intends,

And none be lovers, but who first were friends!

